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CHINESE AERO-REFUELLER : Y-20 & LOITERING DRONES

Y-20 Transport aircraft to have Aerial Refueller variant.

1. An aerial tanker variant of China's Y-20 domestically developed large transport aircraft will make its debut soon. Teng Hui, commander of an Air Force aviation regiment of the PLA Western Theater Command and a Y-20 pilot disclosed this information on China Central Television. A prototype tanker variant of the Y-20 was earlier spotted on commercial satellite photos by foreign media in 2018. When configured for aerial refueling, the Y-20 will be able to carry about 90 tons of fuel, similar to the Il-78, and much more than older indigenously modified H-6U tanker's capacity of 30 tons.



2. **Comments.** The Y-20 tanker variant is expected to augment few imported Il-78 tankers and less capable H-6U refuellers. It will greatly expand the PLA Air Force's operational range by allowing fighter jets and bombers to travel much greater distances, thus transforming the PLA Air Force from a regional force into a strategic one. The Y-20 refuellers would eventually replace the IL-38 tankers.

3. The Y-20 is an excellent basic platform for developing variants because of its large

size and long endurance. An aerial early warning (AEW) variant is also under development. Y-20 is of similar size to the KJ-2000 AWACS, but can use more advanced technologies to enhance its capabilities. Y-20 would thus become a main pillar of the Chinese Air Force's strategic capabilities in near future.

Source - <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1180723.shtml>

Chinese Military to Procure Loitering Munition Drones

4. The Chinese military is procuring two types of loitering munitions, also known as suicide drones. Further details about the procurement, including the specifics on the weapons' performance or number to be purchased, are not yet known. Chinese arms companies have already developed many types of loitering munitions, including the CH-901 and WS-43. The CH-901 is 1.2 m long, weighs nine kg, has a top speed of 150 km per hour, an operational radius of 15 km and an endurance of 120 minutes. The WS-43 can be launched from a rocket launcher, has a range of 60 km and can stay over its target for 30 minutes.



A CH-901 suicide drone developed by China is on display at an exhibition

5. **Comments.** This genre of weapons is considered as a mixture of cruise missile and drone. After taking off, it can remain in the air for an extended period of time for battlefield reconnaissance like a drone, but after locating a target, it can launch a suicide attack like a missile. Some types of suicide drones can return to base for future deployment if they do not find a target. Suicide drones can provide a wide variety of tactics, with the most useful being attack on time-sensitive targets. Launching the suicide drone in advance also means that the enemy will have a harder time locating where it was launched from. Further, suicide drone are also cheaper than armed reconnaissance UAVs.

Source - <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1182330.shtml>